

July 02, 2019

Greetings fellow Cobbers,

It's that time of year again when school is out, days are longer, any many of the days just feel a little bit sweeter. Sometimes, that's because you're just spent a special day with the family and friends, or perhaps, even tasting some of that deliciously sweet summer corn after a Cobber Corn feed!

The last time many of us were together wasn't for a Concordia Corn Feed, but rather our **20th Class Reunion and Homecoming last Fall**. WOW, what a time it was to be together. It was fantastic to see how many of us fell right back into our deep friendships with those we hadn't seen in some time, and of course, furthered many of the life-long friendships that started during our time at Concordia. Thanks again to all of those that participated on the committees to pull together such a fantastic reunion. Of special note, our class also was able to accomplish something truly important and based on all of the generous gifts from so many, established a **Class of 1998 Legacy Scholarship**! This scholarship will provide critical assistance for a student in need each year.

As a class we also did a fantastic job in our giving related to our 20th reunion year. Our goal was to do 20/20/20. That's a total giving level of \$20,000, with 20% of our class participating for our 20th reunion. I'm thrilled to share that we as a class really stepped-up this year and not only did we meet the giving goal, we exceeded it by establishing the 1998 legacy scholarship and total giving credit was \$27,400! This brings our lifetime class giving credit to \$260,284, and total committed giving (with planned gifts to \$426,494). WOW! This was achieved with only 15% of our class participating. Imagine what we can do next if we get in the 20% class participation range.

Our class has always been comprised of people to watch. People doing great things and exemplifying special talents, so I'm not surprised by highly pleased to congratulate two of our classmates, Betsy (Strebel) Grams and Matthew Culloton in being chosen as 2019 Sent Forth Recipients. Congratulations and well-deserved!

Now on with some of our regularly scheduled updates and information.

Concordia Updates

ATHLETICS

During the spring of 2018, Concordia had only one team – women's basketball – with a female head coach. Fast forward one year, and with the hiring of new volleyball head coach Faith Dooley, the Cobbers now have 5 additional female head coaches mentoring student/athletes. Dooley, who was an All-American at the University of North Dakota, joins women's golf head coach Kari Weidner-Ceniceros, Maureen Greiner of women's hockey, Rebecca O'Shurak from women's soccer and NDSU All-American Laura Januszewski who coaches both the men's and women's cross country teams. The rise of female head coaches was recognized by University of Minnesota's Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport in their 2018-19 coaching report card that cited Concordia as the top college in the MIAC for the increase in female head coaches over the past year.

Concordia men's track and field junior Matt Bye, Moorhead, won the heptathlon at this winter's MIAC Indoor Championship Meet and went on to finish 11th in the event at the NCAA National Indoor Meet held in Boston, Mass. Bye won the MIAC title with the second highest point total in school history.

The Cobber men's hockey team earned its seventh consecutive berth in the MIAC playoffs this season. Concordia finished conference play with nine league wins which was the most since the 2013 season. Sophomore forward Tyler Bossert, Fargo, led the MIAC in scoring and went on to earn All-American Second Team honors to become the ninth All-American in program history.

Near and dear to my heart, and of course many of yours, is the fantastic **MUSIC** program at Concordia. For the size of institution, Concordia's music program is stellar, and many educators, performers, and paths of cultural heritage are established in this area. The end of an era is upon us as Dr. René Clausen announced that he will retire following the 2019-20 academic year, concluding his service as professor of music and conductor of The Concordia Choir. Clausen is a leader in choral music as both a conductor and a composer. He is the artistic director of the Concordia Christmas Concerts. In addition to composing arrangements and original pieces for Concordia ensembles, he has written dozens of commissioned compositions including "MEMORIAL" and "Crying for a Dream" for the American Choral Directors Association. Clausen was also commissioned by Concordia to create a major work in observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The work is titled "The Passion of Jesus Christ" and premiered at Orchestra Hall in 2017. President William Craft noted in an announcement to the Concordia community that throughout his work at the college Clausen has lived the mission of The Concordia Choir "to uphold a sacred choral tradition through the uncompromising and unrelenting collaborative pursuit of musical integrity and spiritual expression."

Even with this announcement, great music continues, and The Concordia Choir completed a highly successful tour through the Pacific Northwest in March. The tour featured concerts in Washington, Oregon, Montana, North Dakota, and Minnesota. The Choir also had engagements with ten high school choirs, as well as The Choir of the West at Pacific Lutheran University and a collaboration concert with The Singers – Minnesota Choral Artists at the Ordway in St. Paul. Work is now being done to plan the Choir's 2020 tour to the Southeast United States. Updates and more information can be found at www.TheConcordiaChoir.org. Make your plan now to hear a concert during Dr. Clausen's final tour with the choir to the Southeast United States in 2020!

Great music doesn't stop there though, The Concordia Orchestra completed a very successful fall domestic tour with performances in Appleton, Wausau and Chippewa Falls in Wisconsin and Roseville, Sartell and Brainerd in Minnesota. Repertoire included *Symphony No. 3* by Florence Price, *Scheherazade* by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and *Concerto for Trombone* by Jim Pugh, which featured Concordia Professor of Low Brass Dr. Nathaniel Dickey on trombone. Also joining the tour was guest conductor Christoph Rehli-Fankhauser, professor of conducting at the Lucerne University of Music in Switzerland.

The Concordia Band was invited to perform at both the Minnesota Music Educators Association Mid-Winter Clinic in Minneapolis and the North Dakota Music Educators Association Conference in Bismarck. In addition, the band was also invited to be the featured collegiate band at the Westman Honour Band concert at Brandon University in Brandon, Manitoba. As part of their annual domestic tour, the band performed a joint concert with the Encore Wind Ensemble in St. Paul, MN as well as concerts in St. Anthony Village, Albany and Staples-Motley, all in Minnesota. The band is in the beginning stages of planning their international tour to Spain in May of 2020. How exciting! This should prove to be a tremendous experience for all involved!

LANGUAGE VILLAGES

Summer 2018 was a busy one for Concordia Language Villages. We had over 4700 villagers and families from all over the world attend immersion programs at our Turtle River Lake sites just north of Bemidji and at other leased camps in northern Minnesota. This strong enrollment demonstrates the value families are placing on world language and culture education.

Thanks to a generous gift of \$5 million from the Simone Corporation and its CEO Kenny Park, we will soon begin the first phase of construction of *Sup sog'ui Hosu*, the Korean Language Village, on Turtle River Lake. The first Village to be built was *Skogfjorden*, the Norwegian Language Village, and that happened 50 years ago this summer. A special event to commemorate this milestone will be held on July 13. *Sjölunden*, the Swedish Language Village, celebrates its 45th summer with a *midsommar* event on August 3. International Days are July 5 and August 9 where we will also celebrate 50 years of offering four-week high school credit sessions.

OTHER UPDATES

Concordia's outstanding tradition of preparing students for medical school is now available to those who have completed an undergraduate degree. This intensive, 1-year program is designed for highly motivated individuals with excellent academic records, who have earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year institution, but lack most or all of the prerequisite science courses needed for admission to medical school. Our program is ideal for career changers, and individuals deciding later in their academic journey, to pursue a career in medicine.

Concordia sent 12 members to the American Forensic Association National Individual Events Tournament (AFA-NIET) at the University of Alabama, where 60 colleges and universities from across the United States competed for top honors. Concordia was one of only a few smaller colleges that placed in the top 15, which is dominated by larger research institutions.

The Center for Student Success has a new home in the Normandy. The beautifully renovated space is open and light making for an inviting space for students. The center includes academic support, Orientation and First-Year Transition Programming, the Peer Mentor program, and the Diversity Coordinator for Student Support Services.

More than 300 students presented their posters or spoke at concurrent sessions during Concordia's 2019 Celebration of Student Scholarship (COSS) on April 10. Some students participated in multiple presentations. New at this year's COSS was an art display with printmaking pieces and two sessions presented in Spanish. "Our goal is to keep building on the diversity of research," says Kryss Strand, director of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity and coordinator of the Celebration of Student Scholarship.

A dinner was held April 4 to celebrate the naming of Dr. Dan Biebighauser as holder of The Sigurd and Pauline Prestegard Mundhjeld Endowed Chair of Mathematics. Biebighauser is a 2002 graduate of Concordia and joined the faculty in 2006. The holder of the Mundhjeld chair is to be a person who has provided exemplary service in teaching and scholarship in the field of mathematics and who is known and respected in the field. All of the past holders of the Mundhjeld Endowed Chair were present. Past holders include Dr. Bill Tomhave, Dr. James L. Forde, Dr. Alexander Sze and Dr. Gerald A. Heuer '51.

ALUMNI AWARDS

The National Alumni Board voted on the 2019 Alumni Achievement, Sent Forth and Called to Serve Awards. To learn more about each award, visit www.concordiacollege.edu/alumni/awards-and-recognition/.

2019 Alumni Achievement Award Recipients

- **Dr. Paul Brandvik '59**, professor emeritus of music at Bemidji State University, served as director of choral activities for 31 years. Brandvik received several awards, guest conducted more than 100 festivals and workshops in 16 states and abroad, and composed, edited or arranged more than 50 works.
- **Dr. Kristi Ferguson '71**, is professor emeritus of General Internal Medicine and served as director, Office of Consultation and Research in Medical Education at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine. She spent her entire career at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine where she has greatly influenced the development, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum.
- **Dr. Thomas Samuelson '81**, a board-certified ophthalmologist, is a founding partner and attending surgeon at Minnesota Eye Consultants, P.A., Minneapolis. He's also an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota and on the faculty of Hennepin County Medical Center. He has received several awards and has been named to America's Top Doctors each year since 2002. He has written numerous articles and given more than 600 presentations around the world.
- A 1977 Concordia graduate, **the Rev. Ann Svennungsen** is the bishop of the ELCA Minneapolis Area Synod, the first female bishop to serve in any of the ELCA's six Minnesota synods. She served as a parish pastor prior to serving as president and CEO of The Fund for Theological Education and then as president of Texas Lutheran University. Svennungsen, a well-respected theologian and speaker, is

published in numerous journals, and is invited to lecture, preach, and provide keynote and commencement addresses.

2019 Sent Forth Recipients

- **Betsy Grams '98**, co-founder and executive director of Cycle Health, is a 1998 Concordia graduate. CycleHealth was founded in 2014 to equip kids to power their own wellness. CycleHealth's programs are based on adventure and self-directed goal attainment, and are prescribed by pediatricians in more than 50 Twin Cities clinics through an innovative platform called Sweat Rx.



- **Matthew Culloton '98**, is founding Artistic Director of The Singers – Minnesota Choral Artists. Matthew is a 1998 Concordia graduate and earned a master's and a doctorate from the University of Minnesota. He is Choirmaster at The House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, Minn., an adjunct faculty member at the University of Saint Thomas and composer. Culloton received the VocalEssence/ACDA of Minnesota Creative Programming Award (2003) and MN ACDA Outstanding Young Choral Conductor of the Year Award (2004).

Class Note

It seems that those sending in class notes is really waning. Perhaps, it's because we all had such a solid time catching-up last Fall, or that we do a great job keeping up on Facebook and other social sites. So, without further ado...

- **Jon Ruzek** was promoted to the Vice President of Engagement for the University of Minnesota Alumni Association. Congratulations Jon!

Please remember if you would like to share your news at any time this can be done via the alumni website and submitting a note, or of course with greater immediacy on our class Facebook Page. You can find the page if not already a member by searching "Concordia College Class of 1998". It's a great way to stay in touch!

Take-away tidbits

As each of you continue on through 2019, may you find peace, happiness, and joy as you continue your life journey. As the world seems to be increasing in turmoil, no matter your stance, take time to come back to the roots you have established, and the open mindset so many of us truly started to explore at Concordia. By sharing this mindset, and as exemplified by our fellow classmates, we can do great things and be a part of change for the better.

If you're looking for things to do this summer and into the Autumn, don't forget to check out the Concordia Corn Feeds (happening in a location near you) <https://www.concordiacollege.edu/alumni/corn-feeds/>. Homecoming will be taking place, October 11-13, [ConcordiaCollege.edu/homecoming](https://www.concordiacollege.edu/homecoming) (even if not a reunion year for '98ers), and of course you can follow our class specific updates by joining "Concordia College Class of 1998" on Facebook.

Should you like to suggest improvements or changes for how we communicate with our classmates, ways to stay better in-touch, or would like to help support our class by volunteering time, serving as a mentor, etc. please let me know. We're always looking for additional Cobbers to lend a hand and take things to a new level!

All of the best to you and yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seth G. Thomas", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Seth G. Thomas
Concordia Class Agent, 1998
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